Church (Rock) Cemetery Management Plan 2026-2028



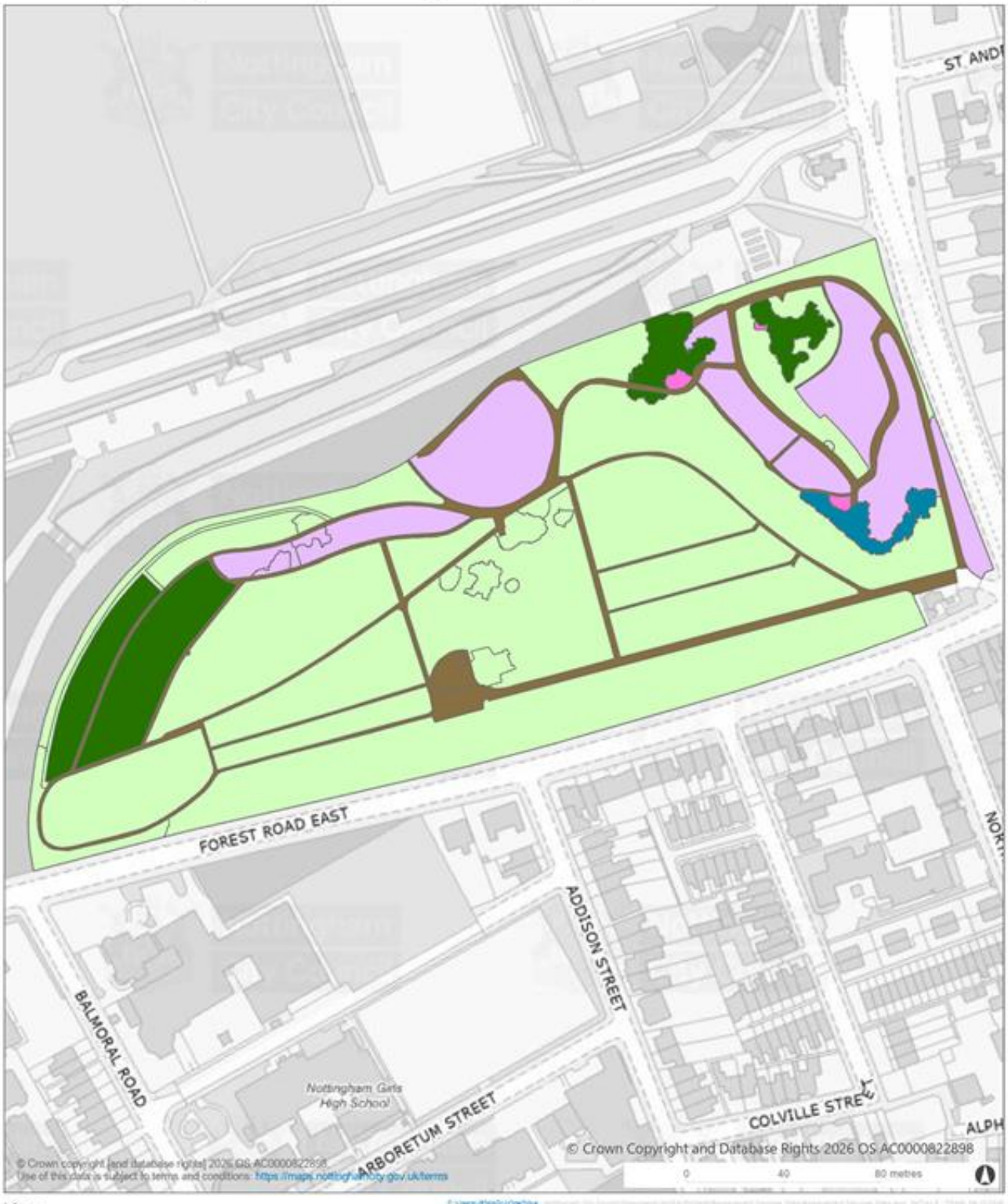
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Church (Rock) Cemetery Management Map

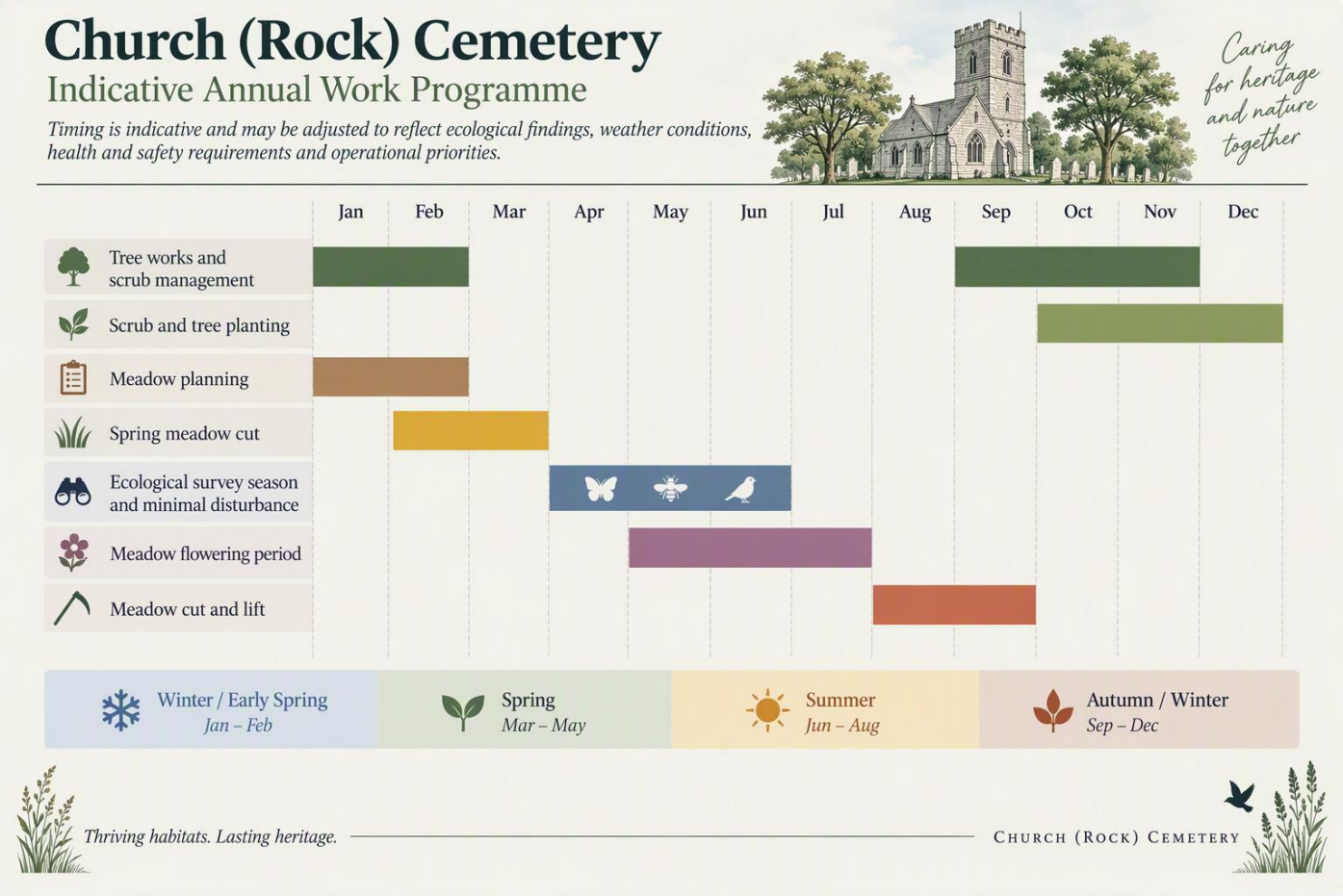


Key

Habitat Zone

- Ecological Protection Areas
- Hardstanding
- Lawn Areas
- Scrub Areas
- Trees and Veteran Tree Areas
- Walls, Headstones and Historic Structures
- Wildflower Meadow Areas
- Woodland/Scrub Edge Areas
- Nottingham City Boundary

Annual Programme of Works



Management Plan Summary

Church (Rock) Cemetery is one of Nottingham's most important heritage and environmental assets, designated as both a Grade II* Registered Park and Garden and a Local Wildlife Site. This management plan provides a framework for balancing heritage conservation, biodiversity enhancement, memorial safety, public access and the Council's ongoing stewardship responsibilities between 2026 and 2028.

Through a zoned management approach, the plan seeks to protect and enhance the site's historic landscape, ecological value and geological features while maintaining a safe, accessible and respectful place of remembrance. It supports the Council's biodiversity duties and promotes proportionate, evidence-led management that secures the long-term conservation of this nationally important site.

Church (Rock) Cemetery Overview

Church (Rock) Cemetery is a designated Local Wildlife Site (LWS) that supports a wide range of habitats, including species-rich grassland, mature trees, scrub, sandstone cliffs, rock cuttings and specialist wall vegetation. These habitats contribute to Nottingham's wider ecological network and support a variety of birds, bats, badgers, invertebrates and other wildlife.

This management plan sets out the biodiversity priorities and management actions for 2026 to 2028. It provides a framework for integrating habitat conservation with heritage protection, public access, memorial safety, tree management and the Council's ongoing statutory and stewardship responsibilities. The plan supports Nottingham City Council's Biodiversity Duty and contributes to the delivery of the Nottinghamshire and Nottingham Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

Recommended Ecological Surveys

Initial ecological surveys were undertaken during summer 2026. To inform future management and habitat enhancement proposals, the following additional surveys are recommended:

- Spring 2027 survey to record woodland and shade-tolerant flora associated with mature trees, terraces and sandstone features.
- Summer 2027 survey to update grassland species inventories and vegetation classification.
- Botanical survey of St Ann's Valley.

Survey findings should be used to refine future management, identify priority areas for protection, and guide habitat enhancement proposals. Until these surveys are completed, existing grassland communities within designated management zones should be retained and managed sensitively.

Why is the Church (Rock) Cemetery a Designated Local Wildlife Site?

Church (Rock) Cemetery was designated as a Local Wildlife Site because of its locally important combination of ecological, geological and historic features. Key features include:

- Species-rich grassland, including areas exhibiting acid grassland characteristics.
- Sandstone cliffs, caves, rock cuttings, walls and exposed rock faces.
- Mature trees, scrub and structurally diverse habitats.
- Specialist grassland, wall and rock flora.
- Habitat supporting birds, bats, badgers and invertebrates.
- A valuable wildlife corridor within Nottingham's urban ecological network.

The site has also been identified as having strategic importance for the delivery of the Nottinghamshire and Nottingham Local Nature Recovery Strategy, particularly in relation to Urban and Post-Industrial Habitat measures.

Site Biodiversity Objectives

Management decisions should seek to:

1. Maintain and enhance the habitats and species that underpin the site's Local Wildlife Site designation.
2. Protect and improve species-rich grassland and other priority habitats.
3. Safeguard notable species populations and improve ecological understanding through ongoing monitoring and survey.
4. Increase habitat diversity through the retention and creation of meadow, scrub, woodland edge, standing deadwood and log pile habitats.
5. Support pollinators, birds, bats and other wildlife through sensitive and evidence-led management.
6. Integrate biodiversity considerations into routine cemetery operations, maintenance programmes and future capital works.

Biodiversity Management Principle

Church (Rock) Cemetery is a designated Local Wildlife Site and a Grade II* Registered Park and Garden of Special Historic Interest. The site remains an active place of remembrance and is subject to ongoing management, maintenance and statutory responsibilities. Public safety remains a primary consideration and biodiversity management should therefore be integrated into routine maintenance and management activities wherever practicable.

The Local Wildlife Site designation does not prevent essential management, maintenance, conservation or safety works from taking place. Instead, it requires ecological considerations to be identified at an early stage and balanced alongside heritage, operational and health and safety requirements, with the least damaging practicable approach implemented wherever possible.

Heritage Management Principle

Church (Rock) Cemetery is a Grade II* Registered Park and Garden of Special Historic Interest and contains a range of designated and non-designated heritage assets, including historic memorials, monuments, boundary walls, sandstone caves, rock faces, pathways, structures and landscape features. The preservation and conservation of these assets form an important part of the Council's stewardship responsibilities.

Heritage considerations should be identified at an early stage and balanced alongside operational, environmental, accessibility and health and safety requirements, ensuring that the most proportionate approach is adopted wherever practicable.

Targeted vegetation management, maintenance and conservation activities may be necessary to:

- Protect memorials and monuments.
- Protect walls, railings, retaining structures and other built heritage.
- Protect sandstone caves, cliffs and geological features.
- Provide access for inspection, conservation, maintenance and statutory safety checks.

The Council's approach is to balance heritage conservation, biodiversity enhancement, public access, memorial safety and operational requirements through planned and proportionate management, ensuring the long-term protection of the cemetery's historic significance while maintaining a safe, accessible and dignified environment for visitors and the bereaved.

Heritage Objectives

Management decisions should seek to:

- Balance heritage conservation with biodiversity, public access and operational requirements.
- Protect and conserve the Grade II* Registered Park and Garden.
- Maintain the condition of historic memorials, monuments, caves and structures.
- Ensure heritage assets remain safe, accessible and capable of inspection.
- Preserve the character and significance of the cemetery for future generations.

Legal and Operational Considerations

Management activities must take account of relevant legislation and Council policies, including:

- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)
- Protection of Badgers Act 1992
- Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006
- Environment Act 2021 Biodiversity Duty
- Nottingham City Council Tree Policy (2025)

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Occupiers' Liability Acts 1957 and 1984
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Local Authorities' Cemeteries Order 1977 (LACO)
- Burial Acts 1852 to 1906
- Local Government Act 1972
- Equality Act 2010
- Building Act 1984
- Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 (if applicable)
- Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (if applicable)

Memorial Safety (Headstones & Monuments)

- British Standard BS 8415 (Memorial Safety)
- NAMM (National Association of Memorial Masons)
- BRAMM (British Register of Accredited Memorial Masons)

Early engagement with Biodiversity Officers is encouraged where works may affect habitats, protected species or other designated features. Local Wildlife Site designation is non-statutory and does not prohibit operational works. However, management decisions should seek to avoid unnecessary harm to designated features and demonstrate that ecological constraints have been considered when determining the most appropriate course of action.

Protected species

Protected species are known or likely to be present across the site due to the diversity of habitats it supports. Management activities must take account of these species and their habitats. Where necessary, ecological surveys, pre-works checks, mitigation measures or seasonal restrictions will be implemented to ensure legal compliance and avoid unnecessary impacts on wildlife.

Habitat Management Zones

The cemetery should be managed using a zoned approach; management intensity should reduce progressively from formal lawn areas towards ecological areas:

Zone	Primary Purpose	Management Prescriptions
Lawn Areas		
	**Formal appearance, visitor access and operational use**	Manage as amenity grassland through regular mowing during the growing season. Maintain clear sightlines, access routes, memorial surrounds and operational areas.
Wildflower Meadow Areas		
	**Maximising biodiversity and botanical interest**	Manage through an annual meadow cutting regime with an early February cut and collect, followed by no further cutting until late summer/early autumn. Cuttings should be removed after approximately 48 hours to allow seed dispersal. Herbicide use will not normally be permitted within these areas. Vegetation management in the form of breed lines, access routes and areas around headstones can be utilised in these areas.
Scrub Areas		
	**Nesting habitat, shelter, foraging opportunities and structural diversity**	Retain and manage selected scrub areas to provide habitat for birds, mammals and invertebrates. Prevent scrub encroachment into species-rich grassland and meadow areas. Enhance retained scrub through the planting of appropriate native species where opportunities arise.
Woodland/Scrub Edge Areas		
	**Transitional habitat supporting a diverse range of species**	Maintain a varied woodland edge structure through selective management of scrub and young trees. Retain a gradual transition between woodland, scrub and grassland habitats to maximise biodiversity value. Avoid creating dense, uniform boundaries wherever possible.

Habitat Management Zones Continued

Zone	Primary Purpose	Management Prescriptions
Trees and Veteran Tree Areas		
	**Veteran tree conservation and invertebrate habitat**	Continue routine tree inspections and safety management. Retain veteran tree features (Tree-related Microhabitats (TreMs)) wherever safe to do so, including cavities, cracks, loose bark, standing deadwood, fungal fruiting bodies and exposed heartwood. Retain felled timber and deadwood habitat within suitable locations where operationally appropriate. Replacement stock will be planted in suitable locations to maintain canopy cover, support succession and secure the long-term ecological value of the site.
Ecological Protection Areas		
	**Protection of sensitive species and habitats**	Areas supporting sensitive features of ecological interest should be subject to minimal disturbance. Access should be limited to essential management, inspection or health and safety works, with advice sought from Biodiversity Officers where appropriate.
Walls, Headstones and Historic Structures		
	**Conservation of specialist flora, geological features and heritage assets.**	Continue routine inspection, maintenance and safety works. Retain specialist wall and rock flora wherever safe and practicable to do so. Avoid unnecessary vegetation removal and minimise herbicide use on walls, memorial structures, retaining walls and exposed rock faces. Any significant works should seek to avoid damage to ecological features associated with the Local Wildlife Site designation.

Vegetation Management

The Council adopts an integrated vegetation management approach that seeks to reduce reliance on herbicides wherever practicable through the use of mechanical, cultural and ecological management techniques. Herbicide use is regularly reviewed and will be minimised within low-management and biodiversity-focused areas wherever practicable. Alternative management approaches will be used where feasible and proportionate.

Targeted herbicide use may be necessary where:

- Control of invasive non-native species listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 is required.
- Vegetation is causing, or is likely to cause, damage to infrastructure, memorials or other assets.
- Vegetation management is necessary to protect sensitive habitats or support the conservation objectives of the site.
- Vegetation is affecting the stability, condition, inspection or maintenance of memorials, monuments and grave markers, creating potential safety, accessibility or heritage risks.
- Vegetation is causing, or is likely to cause, damage to historic structures and heritage assets, including listed monuments, boundary walls, historic railings, vaults and other features of cultural or architectural significance.
- Vegetation growth is adversely affecting the condition, stability or visibility of the Grade II* listed cemetery landscape and associated heritage features, requiring intervention to support their long-term preservation and conservation.
- Vegetation is impacting on the sandstone caves, rock faces, retaining structures or other geological features within the site, where management is required to prevent deterioration, maintain structural integrity or facilitate inspection and monitoring.
- Vegetation is restricting access for inspection, conservation, maintenance or statutory safety checks required to ensure the cemetery remains safe, accessible and fit for purpose.

Any herbicide use should be proportionate, targeted and undertaken in accordance with relevant legislation and Council policies.

Opportunities for Enhancement

Whilst the priority of this plan is to maintain and enhance the features underpinning the site's Local Wildlife Site designation, opportunities exist to further increase biodiversity value.

St Ann's Valley presents a particular opportunity for habitat enhancement through partnership working with volunteers, community groups and local stakeholders. Subject to ecological assessment and site access considerations, opportunities may include habitat restoration, scrub management, native planting and other wildlife-friendly improvements.

Additional enhancements could include the creation of small areas of bare ground for ground-nesting bees and other invertebrates, targeted pollinator habitat improvements, log piles and deadwood habitat, and increasing vegetation structural diversity across the site. All enhancement works should complement existing ecological features and be informed by future survey findings, operational requirements and heritage considerations.

Document Control

Revision date	Version number	Author of changes	Summary of changes
September 2026	0.1	Jemma Maguire & Harriet Thomas	Initial draft prepared.
September 2026	0.2	Jemma Maguire & Ken France	Site-specific management zones, vegetation management requirements and annual work programme refined following internal review
September 2026	0.3	Ken France	Draft reviewed and updated to strengthen the heritage, biodiversity, safety, legal and operational content, plain English update.
October 2026	0.4	Jemma Maguire & Harriet Thomas	Final draft reviewed and amended, with the seasonal programme of works, habitat management overview and zonal mapping now incorporated.
14th October 2026	1.0	Jemma Maguire & Ken France	Final version approved for implementation and publication.